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Inside APHIS

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Immunocontraception: A Wildlife Management Marvel



PHOTO COURTESY OF PENNSYLVANIA STATE UNIVERSITY

The white-tailed deer population in some parts of the United States has increased to the point where they now cause serious problems. However, it is now possible to produce and administer genetically engineered immunocontraceptive vaccines to humanely control white-tailed deer and virtually any wildlife species.

Suburbia has had to face a growing number of problems in recent years. An increase in crime and overcrowding are obvious problems but white-tailed deer?

Although white-tailed deer are a valuable wildlife resource, their population in some parts of the United States has increased to the

point where they now cause serious problems, such as consuming crops, destroying plants, and causing traffic accidents. Considering that a doe gives birth to one or more fawns annually (typically twins), deer damage problems will more than likely continue to escalate as the population increases.

Recent developments in immunology and molecular biology have advanced to where it may be possible to produce and administer genetically engineered immunocontraceptive vaccines to humanely control the population of white-tailed deer or virtually any wildlife species that is in conflict with humans. Basically, immunocontraceptive vaccines work by causing production of antibodies against an animal's oocytes (eggs), sperm, or reproductive hormones. "A lot of work has been done in the past with contraception in wildlife based on treating animals with hormones," says Kathy Fagerstone, Chief of Product Development at Animal Damage Control's Denver Wildlife Research Center (DWRC) in Colorado. "And that can have some problems because sterilization is short term. The compounds administered may remain in body tissues, and the hormones may affect species' behavior. Immunocontraception on the other hand has the potential to sterilize animals without causing hormonal changes."

Delving Into Vaccine Research

DWRC began exploring immunocontraception as a means to alleviate overpopulation in wildlife in 1992. A deer immunocontraception study was initiated in conjunction with Pennsylvania State University scientists at its deer holding facility. The study, which also involves Baylor College of Medicine, is expected to determine the effectiveness of certain types of antigens in causing temporary or permanent infertility in deer.

The immunocontraceptive vaccine receiving the most attention is the zona pellucida vaccine, which

(See VACCINE on page 4)

APHIS Celebrates the Day of the Working Parent

By Ray Nosbaum, Work*Family*Life Council

Every year a number of days are set aside for the purpose of celebrating various famous and not so famous holidays, events, and special people. There's the traditional Mother's and Father's Day and the recently added Boss's Day and Secretary's Day, to name a few. This year, APHIS celebrated another special day that combines family and work; it's the Day of the Working Parent.

Organized by the National Council of Jewish Women, the Day of the Working Parent was created to celebrate the commitment to work by millions of employees who are also parents. APHIS in conjunction with a partnership of agencies, including the Department of Treasury's Financial Management Services, the Office of Personnel Management's Investigations Office, and the Health and Human Services' National Center of Health Statistics, participated in a series of panels and presentations on September 10 in support of the Day

of the Working Parent.

The panels were designed to discuss four major stages of child development: infants/toddlers/preschoolers, elementary school age children, pre-teens/teens, and college age. The two presentations discussed living a balanced life, time and energy savers, and the new Family and Medical Leave Act. APHIS' Work*Family*Life (WFL) Council and the Women's Advisory Committee were the Agency sponsors of the event.

The 1/2-hour panels focused on how the panel members, who are employees of the participating Federal agencies, try to practically manage the conflicts that exist between being a good parent and a good employee. Professional panel participants included Kathy Stasek, a Family Services Counselor with the Philadelphia-based Partnership Group, and Ann Warshauer from the Family Institute in McLean, VA.

Contact WFL's Ray Nosbaum at (301) 436-6658 to watch the video of

the Day of the Working Parent panels and presentations.

The WFL Council is also working on a kit that can be used by field locations to put on similar events. The Council has already distributed a Caregivers Kit, which gives guidance on how to put on events for employees with adult caregiving needs. Each APHIS Regional and Sector office currently has a copy of the kit. ♦

Correction:

In the September/October issue of Inside APHIS, we failed to mention the winner of the APHIS Administrator's Award for Safety and Health. Veterinary Services' Northern Region received this award for being the program area most active in promoting workplace safety and health for fiscal year 1992. Congratulations!

DADS Becomes a Reality

By Celeste Sickles, Documents Management Branch, MSD

Though the idea of automating directives may have seemed an impossible dream when it first surfaced 6 years ago, the dream has now become a reality. In fact, the Departmental Automated Directives System (DADS) is an idea whose time has come.

Managers and employees no longer have to get up from their desks to search for copies of the latest directive or Department regulation. These documents are now virtually at employees' fingertips. As of October 1, APHIS headquarters employees can electronically access Agency directives, bulletins, and administrative notices; Departmental regulations; and Secretary's memorandums and notices through their computers.

All that is needed to access DADS is a personal computer with

Crosstalk Mark 4. Upon request, the Management Services Division (MSD) will install the necessary software and provide instructions for accessing the system. Users will be billed for time spent on the system; the average communications cost is 44 cents per minute.

MSD expects DADS will benefit APHIS employees in several ways, including eliminating the distribution of hard or paper copies to Agency employees and distributing and updating the latest Agency policies more quickly.

In the future, MSD plans to include many manuals and handbooks on DADS and make the system available to field offices. Contact Celeste Sickles in MSD at (301) 436-7705 for more information about DADS and how to access the system. ♦

Inside APHIS

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Director:
John P. Duncan III

Managing Editor:
Rick McNaney

Editor/Designer:
Beth Hulse

Photography Editor:
Laurie Smith

Friends at the Department of Agriculture
Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service

Dear Friends:

Today it is 1 year since Bob had surgery and was found to have inoperable cancer. The day has developed into one of reflection, sorrow, and thankfulness . . . reflection of all that has happened this past year, both good and bad; sorrow over Bob's suffering during that time and our loss of him; and thankfulness for all of you and the many kindnesses you bestowed on us during Bob's illness and after. Your numerous cards, letters, calls, flowers, inquiries, gifts, and prayers frequently "carried the day," and at times overwhelmed both him and me. From my perspective, you clearly demonstrated the team/family spirit that Bob had strived for within APHIS. Across the country and even from outside the country you rallied around us with your support, and there was many a time we talked about how fortunate we were to be a part of the APHIS family. The beautiful memorial service was yet another manifestation of your family spirit, and I believe Bob was with us and was pleased. It was an honor for him and his immediate family, and a tribute to you, his extended family.

God's blessings on all of you for your good works and good deeds.

Sincerely,



Angie Melland

Thrift Savings Open Season

Dan Murphy,
Human Resources Operations,
Minneapolis, MN

It's Thrift Savings Plan (TSP) open season time again. From November 15, 1993, through January 31, 1994, eligible employees may begin contributing to the TSP, change the amount of their TSP contributions, or allocate TSP contributions among the three investment funds. In particular, employees under the Federal Employees Retirement System (FERS) are urged to take advantage of this important part of their retirement plan. Employees newly covered by FERS, however, must wait until their second open season to enroll in TSP.

TSP update pamphlets will be mailed directly to employees with their leave and earnings statements. The TSP Election Form dated 9/90 or later and the Summary of the TSP are unchanged since the last open season. These documents can be requested from your Human Resources Operations (HRO) Staffing Specialist or picked up at Headquarters in Room 229 of the Federal Building in Hyattsville, MD, or Room 0096 in the South Building in Washington, DC.

Election forms submitted during open season will become effective the first pay period of 1994 after they are received. Since the TSP open season is more than 2 months long, only registrations received by the end of open season will be accepted. The TSP Election Form with an original signature, excluding fax copies, must be in HRO's Servicing Personnel Office by close of business on the last day of open season.

Contact your HRO Staffing Specialist if you have any questions about TSP. ♦

Contribute to the Combined Federal Campaign

In this the season of giving, don't forget to sign up to contribute to the Combined Federal Campaign (CFC), which runs through mid-November in APHIS' Maryland and Washington, DC, offices. According to APHIS CFC coordinator Julie Cooper (Management and Budget), the theme for this year's campaign is Building the Bridge of Hope.

Last year, APHIS contributed generously to the campaign—over

\$79,000. Cooper expects the Agency to do even better this year and is shooting for at least a 6-percent increase. There are plenty of charities to donate to this year (2,143), so, choose wisely and choose to make a difference.

Please note that the United Way of the National Capitol Area is in no way affiliated with the United Way of America. ♦

Vaccine from page 1

causes the protein layers surrounding the oocytes to become impervious to sperm penetration. This method affects only female animals and does not alter hormonal releases. Most importantly, zona pellucida vaccines may be developed that will not modify the animals' sexual behavior.

According to Daniel Thompson, the Product Development Section's Biotechnology Unit Leader, of the vaccines tested so far, porcine zona pellucida (PZP) has proven to be the most effective in preventing contraception in deer. "PZP is a vaccine of natural origin produced from the zona pellucida of pig oocytes," explains Thompson.

However, there are problems with this vaccine. "White-tailed deer tend to be particularly active during rutting (or breeding) season, which runs from November to the end of February," says DWRC immunologist Lowell Miller. "Males fight. Females move around a lot. In all, a



APHIS PHOTO BY BRAD JOHNSON

Immunocontraceptive vaccines work by causing production of antibodies against an animal's oocytes (eggs), sperm, or reproductive hormones. Here, scientists draw a blood sample from a white-tailed deer.



APHIS PHOTO BY BRAD JOHNSON

Here, a deer is being prepared for vaccine injection and blood drawing at the University's deer holding facility.

lot of extra energy is expended. And, although PZP prevents pregnancy in does during rutting season, the vaccine may not stop does from experiencing consecutive heat cycles, which could place undue stress on the deer."

As a result, DWRC scientists are focusing their efforts on researching genetically engineered vaccines that will be species specific for white-tailed deer and will prevent consecutive heat cycles. "We are working with Baylor College of Medicine to develop such a vaccine," says Thompson. "We have made some progress in identifying the particular epitope (a portion of the zona pellucida) that would shut down ovulation in does so they won't have consecutive heat cycles," adds Miller.

DWRC scientists are also looking at some hormone vaccines—particularly a Gonadotropin-Releasing Hormone vaccine—for preventing conception in damaging species of rodents. This vaccine affects both sexes of rodents by modifying hormonal releases from the pituitary

gland, altering their sex drives.

The Delivery System

Assuming an effective immunocontraceptive vaccine is developed, how would the deer be vaccinated? Capturing herds of deer and injecting them individually with a vaccine certainly isn't feasible for large-scale projects. That leaves developing a method for delivering the vaccine orally with baits.

DWRC is researching two very different oral delivery methods for administering the immunocontraceptive vaccines. The first method uses live vectors, such as genetically altered or modified bacteria, to carry the vaccine to the deer's immune system. According to Miller, the method was first used in Europe in an effort to eliminate rabies in foxes. Apparently, thousands of baits with encapsulated vaccinia viruses were spread over a large area. So, when the foxes ate the baits, the vaccine was released into their tonsils and carried to the immune system.

The other oral delivery method

uses vaccines delivered in synthesized, biodegradable microbeads or liposomes, which are eaten by the target animals.

"The challenge here," says Miller, "is to develop a vaccine that can get past the acid in the stomach into the small intestine where immune cells attack and release the vaccine."

Other Benefits

There also appears to be a correlation between the number of deer in an area and the spread of Lyme's disease, which is transmitted

by ticks found on the deer.

"Lyme's disease has become very prevalent in the East and more recently has appeared in the Western United States," says Fagerstone. "So, one possibility we are looking at is using a contraceptive vaccine in conjunction with another vaccine that would affect the survival of ticks that host the disease. That way, at the same time we are reducing the deer population, we will also be reducing the tick population in the area."

Immunocontraception Symposium

In an effort to bring together leading experts, resource managers, and others interested in immunocontraception to exchange ideas and discuss research findings, management approaches, policy issues, and future research plans, DWRC organized and sponsored a immunocontraception symposium in Denver from October 26-28. ♦

ExCEL Graduates First Master Performer

The Excellence Through Competency, Experience, and Learning (ExCEL) Program has graduated its first Master Performer. Carol Smith (Biotechnology, Biologics, and Environmental Protection) has spent the last 18 months completing various training and developmental assignments designed to prepare her for additional career responsibilities. Smith's accomplishments in the program include, among other things, conducting presentations on her ExCEL activities for other clerical employees and developing a data base for training questionnaires.

In addition to completing all her training and assignments, Smith had to submit a written report and give an oral presentation to a three-member panel illustrating the knowledge and skills she gained as a Master Performer. Smith received her Master Performer Certification in July.

Conceived in 1991, ExCEL is a comprehensive training and career development program for APHIS office support staff. The purpose of the program is, among other things, to attract and retain a high-quality clerical staff, provide skills required for excellent clerical performance, and offer career growth and development. The program is structured in three levels: Expert, Master Performer, and Master Performer Trainer.

The EXPERT level training includes the core skills required by

all clerical office support staff at all grade levels. EXPERT participants must attain scores of 90-100 percent on nine performance-based tests to receive certification at this level and become eligible for the Master Performer Program.

At the Master Performer level, participants remain in their current positions and spend 10 percent of their time working with Recruitment and Development (R&D) to develop skills in training and employee development. Upon completion of

this level, participants like Smith are eligible to compete for the Master Performer Trainer level.

If selected, Master Performer Trainers receive a promotion of one grade level above their current grade. These participants also remain at their current workstations but spend 20 percent of their time working with R&D in the employee development area. Master Performer Trainers also develop and/or deliver office skills training to Agency employees. ♦



APHIS PHOTO BY LAURIE SMITH

Acting APHIS Administrator Lonnie King presents Carol Smith (BBEP) with her Master Performer certification. Smith is ExCEL's first Master Performer graduate.

Bobby R. Acord—Reinventing the ADC Program

By Robin Porter, Public Information, LPA

Near the chair of Animal Damage Control (ADC) Deputy Administrator Bobby R. Acord rests a replica of the family pet, "Spike." Like his bulldog, Acord is famous for his tenacity and hardiness.

Always within reach on his desk is a paperweight that echoes Acord's sense of humor and outlook on life. It reads: "If you're not the lead dog, your view is always the same." Nearby on his coffee table is his collection of well-read books about reinventing government, putting people first, and managing at the speed of change.

Acord's Associate Deputy Administrator and co-strategist Donald Hawthorne describes Acord as a visionary who gives and seeks constant oral feedback about how to improve the ADC program. Like two business associates on a tennis court, it is routine for Hawthorne and Acord to volley ideas back and forth between their adjacent offices throughout the day.

"... everything we do in the ADC program is directed toward the empowerment of our employees."

Bobby Acord

"Bobby knows how to get the job done," says Hawthorne, a former State and Regional Director for the ADC program. "Not only does he know how to second guess situations, he knows how to get ahead of them. His leadership style is tenacious."

Acord's own view of his leadership role is more modest. "Well, I certainly try to build consensus whenever possible," says Acord, "but I recognize that in the controversial area of wildlife management consensus is not always possible. For the most part, my leadership style is very direct. I enjoy working with people. I think that's a definite asset in trying to build consensus."

Acord also makes a point to ask others questions and to gain their input. "I think everything we do in the ADC program is directed toward the empowerment of our employ-

ees," he explains, pausing briefly to select his words. "My role is to set the stage for reinventing the program. The only way I can do that is by giving all 730 program employees resources and effective control methods that are publicly acceptable that enable them to do their work."

"My goal is to see that the ADC program develops publicly acceptable wildlife control methods and maintains a professional workforce."

Bobby Acord

Since the ADC program's transfer from the Department of the Interior to USDA in 1985, its activities have changed to include the protection of human health and safety, natural resources, and new agricultural enterprises.

The program is also continuing to focus on developing alternative methods for wildlife damage control at its Denver Wildlife Research Center in Colorado. The Center is the only national and international research facility devoted entirely to the development of new technologies and alternative methods of wildlife management control.

"My goal is to see that the ADC program develops publicly acceptable wildlife control methods and maintains a professional workforce. This will ensure a responsible wildlife control program that will carry us into the next century," he says.

Focusing on Change

Acord is keenly interested in the Secretary of Agriculture's plan for reinventing the Department because it mirrors the ADC program's own efforts to reinvent itself.

"We have been trying to redirect the program to focus our attention on giving the maximum protection from wildlife damage while having the least possible impact on wildlife. We must also consider the views and opinions of all those who have an interest in wildlife, including our proponents and our opponents.

It is in that context that we are

reframing and reshaping the direction of the program."

As part of the 60-year-old program's metamorphosis, ADC is considering a name change to go along with its internal changes.

"ADC is a name out of the history books," says Acord, "and frankly, it ought to serve as a foundation for change rather than to encumber our future. We believe that it is more appropriate to have a name that reflects what we do. We don't work with all animals; we work only with wildlife species."

In support of the ADC program's new course, the International Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies recently passed a resolution commending the program for its leadership, direction, cooperation, and responsiveness to the need to conduct a socially acceptable, environmentally sound, and effective wildlife damage management program."

Hooked on ADC

If anyone knows the ins and outs of reinvention, it's Acord. He began his USDA career in 1966 as a meat grader. After serving in the Army and several USDA field stations in the West and Midwest, Acord joined APHIS in 1973. Throughout this period his administrative assignments ranged from labor management relations to legislative affairs. Then in 1986, the newly transferred ADC program piqued Acord's interest causing his career path to veer again.

"The ADC program brings accountability, professionalism, and environmental sensitivity to wildlife damage control."

Bobby Acord

"I became enamored with the enthusiasm of ADC employees and their passion for their work," says Acord. "They have a great reverence for wildlife and a commitment to their work that goes far beyond anything I've encountered in my many years of government service."

The only problem I have with ADC employees is keeping them from working too many hours," he adds, clearly proud of having such a difficulty.

Overcoming Doubts

Acord acknowledges that perhaps the greatest challenge ADC faces is fighting the myth that the program is not changing.

"I don't think many people understand the broad range of problems caused by wildlife species and the complexities of dealing with these problems," he says. "They think the only thing the ADC program does is predator control in the West. The reality is that the program is being forced to address a wider range of wildlife damage issues because of the expanding wildlife population and their habitat degradation. The program is becoming more and more involved in health and human safety issues, the protection of endangered species, and the control of animals that spread zoonotic diseases, such as rabies.

"The ADC program values the public's opinion and the public's input on the decisions we make."

Bobby Acord

"I think that one of the mistaken opinions of our critics is that if they get rid of the ADC program, they would get rid of wildlife damage control," continues Acord. "What would result instead is that those with wildlife problems would take control methods into their own hands. This would have a very negative impact on wildlife resources and the environment—things that we all hold near and dear to our hearts. The ADC program brings accountability, professionalism, and environmental sensitivity to wildlife damage control."

(See ACORD on page 15)



APHIS PHOTO BY LAURIE SMITH

After graduating with a bachelor's degree in animal science from West Virginia University in 1966, Bobby R. Acord joined the Department of Agriculture's Marketing and Inspection Service as a meat grader. Before moving to the headquarters staff in Washington, DC, he served in several field stations in the West and Midwest. In 1973, Acord joined APHIS, where he subsequently held various administrative positions, including an assignment as Executive Director of what was then APHIS' Office of Legislative and Intergovernmental Affairs.

Acord got his first taste of the Animal Damage Control (ADC) program from January 1986 to September 1987, when he served as the program's Assistant Deputy Administrator. In 1988, he became the Director of ADC's Western Regional Office in Denver, CO, and was responsible for directing program activities in the 17 Western States plus Alaska and Hawaii. Acord was named as ADC's Associate Deputy Administrator in 1989 and then selected as the program's Deputy Administrator in March 1990.

APHIS Honor Awards

The atmosphere was quite festive at the Secretary of Agriculture's First Annual Celebration of Excellence Awards Ceremony, which was held on September 23 at the Mall in downtown Washington, DC. Agency and Department employees attended the ceremony in support of colleagues being honored for their outstanding achievements and

contributions to the Department. Following the ceremony, there was a hearty barbecue picnic lunch with special guest Willie Nelson providing the musical entertainment. APHIS was well-recognized at the affair receiving seven service awards. Supervisory Veterinary Medical Officer Phillip A. Pickerill and PPQ's Hurricane Emergency Action Team

(HEAT) received Distinguished Service Awards. Beatrice V. Thompson (PPQ), the User Fee Task Force, PPQ's Export Certification Unit in Port Operations, REAC's Mississippi Sting Operation, and the Aircraft Section of PPQ's Aircraft and Equipment Operations all received Superior Service Awards. ♦

Phillip A. Pickerill

Brucellosis—one of the most serious and costly diseases of livestock—has long plagued Texas, one of the larger cattle-producing States. However, thanks to the efforts of Supervisory Veterinary Medical Officer Phillip A. Pickerill, the State has been making significant progress toward becoming brucellosis-free. Under Pickerill's leadership, the number of infected cattle herds in Texas was reduced from 690 herds at the beginning of fiscal year 1990 to 198 herds as of August 1993.

The immense size of Texas and the close proximity of foreign livestock populations in Mexico presented Pickerill with unique and constant challenges that had to be dealt with on a daily basis. The presence of exotic ticks on imported animals, the rejection of cattle infested with pesticide-resistant ticks, and the ever-present problem of stray or smuggled animals

entering the United States from Mexico are just a few of the situations Pickerill faced this year.

Increasing program efficiency while reducing unsupported staff years has been another one of Pickerill's goals. Despite having to assume responsibility from the Texas Animal Health Commission for the enforcement of the Swine Health Protection Act and create six field positions, Pickerill was still able to reduce the number of full-time permanent positions without a significant workload adjustment; the savings of this staff reduction in salary, benefits, travel, and supplies totals roughly \$540,000 yearly.

The Department recognizes Phillip A. Pickerill with a Distinguished Service Award for his outstanding leadership in the administration of a major APHIS program and for establishing and maintaining the effective use of human resources. ♦



Veterinary Medical Officer Phillip A. Pickerill was recognized with a Distinguished Service Award.

Hurricane Emergency Action Team (HEAT)

On the morning of August 24, 1992, a class 4 hurricane ripped through South Florida with winds measuring over 150 miles-per-hour. In just a few hours, the Miami area had suffered the worst national disaster to ever strike the United States. Though no USDA employee lives were lost, many lost their homes and belongings.

As Area II Hurricane Coordinator, Port of Miami Officer in Charge Michael S. Hornyak began tracking Hurricane Andrew soon after it

formed in the Atlantic. Two days before the storm struck and almost 24 hours before the National Hurricane Center issued a hurricane watch for South Florida, he contacted other Area II managers and advised them to begin preparing for a possible hurricane.

Utilizing the guidelines provided in the Hurricane Emergency Plan, Hornyak, Officer in Charge Victor C. Withee, and Assistant Officer in Charge Gerard J. Russo prepared each work location for the possible

impact of a major hurricane. Russo coordinated efforts to secure all Government vehicles, ensured computer equipment at the Maritime Office was protected, and solicited volunteers to serve at a communications/operations center during and after the storm.

Within hours after the storm, Hornyak, Withee, and Russo established contact with employees at the communications/operations center and began assessing the situation. Despite extensive damage

APHIS Honor Awards

to his own home, Withee reported to the Area Office and began a detailed assessment of the overall situation. However, because of the closure of the Miami International Airport and the Port of Miami, no program activities could commence.

Two days after Hurricane Andrew made landfall the Airport reopened for limited air service, and, under Russo's direction, passenger clearance was resumed, though few employees were able to return to work. Under guidance from Withee, vessel inspections resumed and cargo clearance began on a limited basis. When power was restored to the Miami Inspection Station, Hornyak reopened the facility and began limited clearance of propagative plant material. The efforts of these three individuals restored full PPQ operational capability to the airport within a little more than 72 hours after the storm.

Realizing the extent of the damage to the homes and lives of APHIS employees in South Florida, PPQ officer William C. James III obtained permission to utilize PPQ employees on official time to provide emergency assistance to those employees in need. James coordinated the project, which was named the Hurricane Employee Action Team (HEAT). Along with James, Hornyak, Withee, and Russo organized the distribution of food, water, emergency equipment, and other donations. A total of 54 employees volunteered for HEAT, patching roofs, clearing debris, moving furniture, ripping out carpets, and helping employees in any way possible. In all, HEAT provided invaluable assistance and comfort to employees affected by the hurricane.

The Department recognizes Officer in Charge **Michael S. Hornyak**, Officer in Charge **Victor C. Withee**, Assistant Officer in Charge **Gerard J. Russo**, and PPQ Officer **William C. James III** with a Distinguished Service Award for demonstrating commitment, dedication, and resourcefulness in helping APHIS PPQ employees overcome the devastation and heartache caused by Hurricane Andrew. ♦



APHIS PHOTO BY FERNANDO LENIS

On August 24, 1992, the Miami area suffered the worst national disaster to ever strike the United States. Hurricane Andrew, with its 150 miles-per-hour winds, devastated areas of South Florida and closed the Miami International Airport and the Port of Miami for 2 days.



APHIS PHOTO BY FERNANDO LENIS

The Hurricane Emergency Action Team (HEAT) was organized by Plant Protection and Quarantine Officer William C. James III to provide emergency assistance to those employees in need. HEAT volunteers distributed food, water, emergency equipment, and other donations.

APHIS Honor Awards

Beatrice V. Thompson



Plant Protection and Quarantine's Beatrice V. Thompson was recognized with a Superior Service Award.

Ask any manager or office worker. Secretaries are a vital component of an efficient office. Yet, too often secretaries do not receive sufficient recognition for their contributions. Beatrice V. Thompson, lead secretary to the Plant Protection and Quarantine's South Central Regional Director is striving to get secretaries the recognition they deserve.

In hopes of identifying ways to improve the management of secretarial and clerical support services, APHIS undertook a yearlong study in 1990 to review all aspects of the secretarial and clerical employee's work environment and suggest areas for change.

Because of Thompson's enthusiasm for this study and her active participation in one of the study's important workshops, she was the sole secretary selected to represent PPQ on a subgroup that developed the actual issue statements and action steps contained in the study's final report. (The report was issued in September 1991.)

Spurred by APHIS' study, Thompson approached the PPQ South Central Regional Director with an initiative for organizing PPQ's first Secretarial/Clerical Employee

Utilization (SCEU) committee. The committee's goal was to develop recommendations on issues or problems that occur at the local or regional level, leaving the Human Resources staff to handle the national issues.

Through persistent efforts, Thompson was able to organize the South Central Region's SCEU in December 1991 and was unanimously elected chairperson of the committee.

Under Thompson's leadership, recommendations developed by the SCEU resulted in an increased awareness and recognition of the secretary/clerical work force as professionals in PPQ. Because of the successful result of the South Central Region's SCEU, other regions and PPQ's headquarter's staff organized similar committees.

The Department recognizes Beatrice V. Thompson with a Superior Service Award for providing superior leadership and contributions toward improving the workplace and recognition of the secretarial/clerical workforce in the South Central Region of PPQ. The Department also recognizes her accomplishments with the Reinventing Government Award. ♦

User Fee Task Force

How do you put a price on protecting American agriculture? That was the question facing the User Fee Task Force. Actually, it was more like how much do the inspection services provided by Plant Protection and Quarantine officers cost? They are both complicated questions.

In recent years, Congress has authorized more agencies to collect fees from individuals or industries for Government services provided to them. By charging user fees, the burden of paying for these services is shifted from the general taxpayer to the recipient of the services.

In May 1991, APHIS began collecting the first of its user fees. The Agency now charges fees for inspecting passengers, aircraft, trucks, railroad cars, and vessels, providing services for the export or import of animals or birds, and issuing export certification for plants.

Amazingly, the Task Force was able to develop and implement the first group of fees within a 6-month period; typically this process takes 13 months. The second group of fees was implemented only 8 months later.

The process of implementing user fees is complex; fees must be

developed, a proposed rule describing the new fees and procedures must be published in the Federal Register for public comment, all comments received must be considered, and a final rule must be published in the Federal Register.

The Task Force made every effort to minimize the burden on those individuals and industries that would pay user fees. They also modeled APHIS' collection of the first group of user fees after the United States Customs Service, which has been collecting user fees since 1985. The Task Force even arranged for Customs officials to

APHIS Honor Awards

collect APHIS' truck and vessel fees during their own collection of fees.

As a result of the extraordinary effort of this Task Force, APHIS minimized any additional financial or administrative burden on affected individuals or countries.

The Department recognizes the User Fee Task Force, which includes Supervisory Systems Accountant **Barbara L. Thompson**, Supervisory Accountant **Donna J. Ford**, Accountant **Diane M. Eggert**, Supervisory Budget Analyst **Roger A. Nale**, Supervisory Agriculturist **Chuck A. Havens**, Agriculturist **Don R. Thompson**, Regulatory Analyst **Elna K. Barnett-Hunter**, Economists **Trang T. Vo** and **Janette R. Grimes**, Management Analyst **Cheryl Jenkins**, Legislative and Public Affairs Deputy Director **Angela P. Henstridge**, Supervisory Financial Management Analyst **Helen Schmitt**, and Financial Management Analysts **Deborah K. Meyers** and **Christine K. Caraher**, with a Superior Service Award for significant achievement in developing and implementing user fee regulations that are expected to save taxpayers approximately \$400 million over the next 5 years. ♦



APHIS PHOTO BY LAURIE SMITH

With the implementation of user fees, APHIS now charges fees for inspecting passengers, aircraft, trucks, railroad cars, and vessels, providing services relating to the export or import of animals or birds, and issuing export certification for plants.



The inspection services provided by APHIS employees are essential for protecting American agriculture. By charging user fees, APHIS shifts the burden of paying for these services from the general taxpayer to the recipient of the services. Amazingly, the User Fee Task Force was able to develop and implement the user fees in just over a year.

APHIS PHOTO BY LAURIE SMITH

APHIS Honor Awards

Export Certification Unit



APHIS PHOTO BY LAURIE SMITH

In fiscal year 1992, Plant Protection and Quarantine's Export Certification Unit provided phytosanitary certificates for approximately \$23 billion dollars' worth of plants and plant products.

In fiscal year 1992, U.S. agricultural exports are expected to have reached \$41.5 billion. Of this amount, Plant Protection and Quarantine (PPQ) officials provided phytosanitary certificates for approximately \$23 billion dollars' worth of plants and plant products. Ensuring the United States can successfully export such quantities of plants and plant products is quite a feat; it's no wonder PPQ's Certification Unit (ECU) has its hands full.

The increasing focus on eliminating international trade barriers has also kept the ECU busy dealing with unprecedented trade issues raised by the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade, the U.S.—Canada Free Trade Agreement, the North American Free Trade Agreement, and the European Community. All the while, the unit has managed to maintain the respect of the international plant protection community by managing a top-notch certification program, which issued a startling 240,000 phytosanitary certificates last year alone.

Fiscal year 1992 was a particularly productive year for the ECU in other areas as well. Its accomplishments include:

- developing and introducing into commerce a new certificate to assist American exporters in the foreign marketing of certain processed and manufactured plant products.

- developing in conjunction with Mexico workplans for the certification of U.S. apples and stone fruits

and creating a procedure for production-area approval.

- participating in the development and implementation of the Export Certification Project (EXCERPT), which computerizes the summaries of foreign phytosanitary import requirements.

- developing in cooperation with the forest products industry of the Pacific Northwest a memorandum of understanding that permits an industry certification system for kiln-dried coniferous sawn wood as an alternative to Federal phytosanitary certification.

- developing in cooperation with Agriculture Canada a certification program that enables soiled white potatoes to be exported to Canada during a brief period each year.

- helping to obtain an exception from the European Community's requirement that all coniferous lumber from the United States be kiln dried.

The Department recognizes the Export Certification Unit, which includes Senior Operations Officer **Leonard Crawford** and Assistant Operations Officers **Narcy Klag** and **Jonathan Jones**, with a Superior Service Award for sustained superior performance in enhancing the nation's ability to export agricultural commodities throughout the world. ♦



APHIS PHOTO BY LAURIE SMITH

Plant Protection and Quarantine's Export Certification Unit, which is comprised of Senior Operations Officer Leonard Crawford (center) and Assistant Operations Officers Narcy Klag (left) and Jonathan Jones, issued 240,000 phytosanitary certificated last year alone.

APHIS Honor Awards

Mississippi Sting Operation

It almost sounds like a segment from one of those television crime shows: APHIS foils illegal Mississippi livestock market with undercover sting operation. Though this operation didn't make primetime, it is highly commendable.

The goal of this particular sting operation was to uncover a Mississippi livestock market that was thought to be illegally selling brucellosis-exposed cattle to unsuspecting herd owners. According to Title 9 of the Code of Federal Regulations, cattle that test positively for brucellosis must go to slaughter to prevent the spread of the disease. In addition, cattle exposed to *Brucella*-positive animals may also be infected with the disease and must either be sent to slaughter or returned to the farm of origin to be tested at a later date.

APHIS had traced the source of newly infected cattle herds in Arkansas and Missouri to the market in question. However, proving that the market was using illegal screening procedures was the challenge.

In late December 1990, Mississippi cattlemen offered to assist USDA in exposing the livestock market, and a written plan and binding agreement between the cattlemen, Veterinary Services officials, and Regulatory Enforcement officials was developed.

The operation began with the cattlemen and an undercover agent from the Office of the Inspector General purchasing 15 adult cows from the market in question. Every precaution was taken to ensure that the cattle were brucellosis negative. Regulatory Enforcement personnel then placed microchip implants under the skin of the animals and blood samples were sent to the National Veterinary Services Laboratory in Ames, IA, to provide positive identification of the cattle. A portion of the cattle were later injected with the brucella Strain 19 vaccine to produce a false positive blood test.

The next step called for the herd owner and an undercover investigator to contact the market operator. They expressed concern that some of the purchased cattle might have brucellosis. In response, the



APHIS PHOTO

Veterinary Services and Regulatory Enforcement officials in conjunction with the Office of the Inspector General and Mississippi cattlemen uncovered evidence that a Mississippi livestock market was illegally selling brucellosis-exposed cattle to unsuspecting herd owners.

market operator requested that blood samples be drawn and delivered to him for testing. After the samples were tested, the market operator called the herd owner and informed him that his concerns were correct. The market operator then instructed the cattlemen to kill the positive cows and bring the negative cows to the next sale. During the sale, the operator concealed the identity of the animals' herd of origin and allowed the animals to be sold as unrestricted cattle. Two Regulatory Enforcement investigators posed as buyers from Arkansas and purchased the cattle.

As a result of the evidence uncovered in the Sting Operation, the market operator was found guilty of illegally screening for brucellosis. The case was settled by a plea agreement in which the

defendant received two concurrent, 5-year probations, 50 hours of community service, and 60 days in the county jail. He also paid fines in excess of \$35,000 to APHIS for the cost of the operation.

The Department recognizes those involved in the Mississippi Sting Operation with a Superior Service Award for successfully uncovering a market in Mississippi that was illegally screening cattle for brucellosis. Those recognized were: Enforcement Specialist **David B. Head**, Special Agent **Stephen G. Gaines**, Supervisory Veterinary Medical Officer **James D. Tanner**, Investigator **Jimmy L. McFarland**, Investigator **Lynwood A. Suber**, Investigator **Doyle W. Owens**, Senior Investigator **O. Aldean Valentine**, and Cattle Producers **Harmon** and **Laverne Stanford**. ♦

APHIS Honor Awards

Aircraft and Equipment Operations, Aircraft Section

In the past, when APHIS conducted aerial distribution of sterile fruit flies over urban areas or aerial applications of pesticides for large-scale programs, it was difficult to determine the level of success. The aircraft had to be guided over designated areas by numerous personnel waving flags, gas-filled balloon markers, and high-intensity lights.

Over the past 4 years, the Aircraft Section of Plant Protection and Quarantine's Aircraft and Equipment Operations has been evaluating, selecting, and implementing unique and highly specialized equipment and systems to improve agricultural aviation activities. The new technology the Aircraft Section implemented has reduced the cost of equipment and personnel for ground support and improved personnel safety and the overall quality of aerial application programs.

Electronic guidance and flight path recording equipment now exists that utilizes worldwide navigation frequencies to monitor agricultural flying activities. The Aircraft Section evaluated this



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Over the last 4 years, the Aircraft Section of Plant Protection and Quarantine's Aircraft and Equipment Operations has been evaluating, selecting, and implementing unique and highly specialized equipment and systems to improve agricultural aviation activities.

technology and through selective use developed operational procedures to complement aerial application activities. Now, information such as the accuracy of treatments and whether sensitive sites were

avoided can be collected onboard the aircraft and analyzed immediately upon the plane's return.

The Aircraft Section has also implemented a new system known as SATLOC, which uses satellite signals that are not subject to the interference or distortion that affects ground-based systems. Although the signal is controlled by the U.S. Department of Defense and is randomly distorted, procedures and equipment have been developed to electronically correct the distortion. The SATLOC system is now capable of guiding an airplane within less than a meter of a selected flight line.

The Department recognizes the Aircraft and Equipment Operations Aircraft Section, which includes Aircraft Mechanic Helper **Julian Peralez, Jr.**, Aircraft Mechanic **Jesus M. Garza**, Electronic Mechanic **Baldemar Gonzales**, Supervisory Equipment Specialist **James R. Wallingford**, Supervisory Airplane Pilot **Timothy J. Roland**, and Airplane Pilots **Thomas C. Hyde**, **Bruce D. Radsick**, **Gilberto D. Rodriguez, Jr.**, and **Billy F. Tanner**, with a Superior Service Award for the development and implementation of advanced electronic technology to support agricultural aviation activities. ♦



APHIS PHOTO BY RONALD L. WHITE

Technology is now available that can enable a plane applying pesticide or releasing sterile fruit flies to record the accuracy of treatments and even whether sensitive areas within a treatment area have been avoided.

Traveling Safely Overseas: Part II

By Eric R. Hoffman, International Services Representative to the National APHIS Safety and Health Council

With the demand for international travel growing steadily in APHIS, it is essential that employees have access to the most up-to-date safety and health information about the countries they are visiting. Since 1992, APHIS has relied on a data base purchased by the National APHIS Safety and Health Council to send APHIS international travelers information on safety, health, and security concerns worldwide.

Now, thanks to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in Atlanta, GA, there is a complementary system in place that all APHIS international travelers can access directly. Regardless of an

employee's location, they can receive health advice over the fax machine in advance of an international trip. The service is operable from any push-button telephone, and, though it is a toll call, CDC pays the cost of transmitting the fax sheets to you in return.

Simply call (404) 332-4565 and follow the instructions to order a directory sheet. The directory shows a six-digit number for each document. Then call back and order by number as many as five documents at once. For those employees without access to a fax machine, call (404) 332-4559 to receive the same information.

The main directory headings are

reference documents on vaccinations, disease risk and prevention information on 16 regions of the world, and bulletins on specific disease outbreaks. The information provided tends to be very specific, detailing not only the disease or parasite occurring in each country but also the States and areas involved within each country. Therefore, travelers may customize vaccinations and medicines for each specific trip depending on their destinations. CDC has developed a quality service, and all APHIS travelers should avail themselves of this valuable information before any international travel. ♦

Acord from page 7

Increasing Public Awareness

"The ADC program values the public's opinion and the public's input on the decisions we make. We are not in the habit of making decisions in a vacuum," says Acord. "The program is interested in seeking a variety of perspectives whether they are from our critics, our beneficiaries, or our cooperators."

To keep abreast of these perspectives, the ADC program pays close attention to correspondence received concerning program activities and meets annually with a group of advisors. The program recently hosted six focus groups in Washington, DC, and Salt Lake City, UT. Participants included members of the Wildlife Society; the Humane Society of the United States; the Sierra Club; catfish, sunflower, sheep, rice, and cattle associations; the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service; and several other State and Federal agencies. Acord also makes an effort to meet frequently with representatives from all of these groups and others.

So, what more should the ADC program do to assist with wildlife damage? One of the answers can be found in the Capitol's own backyard: Maryland. Since 1991, the ADC program has offered a toll-free wildlife information number to the general public in that State. To date, the line has provided thousands of callers with advice on how to handle everything from a raccoon in the garbage to techniques for keeping geese away from golf courses. The ADC program has also established toll-free telephone numbers in Wisconsin, Vermont, and New Hampshire.

"We think the 1-800 numbers are very successful in fighting the spread of rabies in the Northeast and in providing access to information about how to solve wildlife problems humanely," says Acord, adding that the program hopes to expand the service in the future.

Another of the program's goals is to encourage employees to continue their education, participate in recruiting a diverse workforce, join

professional societies, and accept public speaking opportunities.

Outside of the Agency, the ADC program supports the wildlife management profession by helping fund a wildlife damage control curriculum at Utah State University's Berryman Institute. The program is also working with the U.S. Forest Service to develop a center of excellence at Lincoln University in Jefferson City, MO. The goal in this venture is to increase both teaching and research capacities at historically black colleges and universities.

"It is only through the growth and involvement of the program that we can effectively communicate wildlife management strategies to other professionals and ultimately to the public," says Acord.

When asked if he plans to lead ADC into the future, his reply is quick and affirmative.

"Yes. It's still fun and it's one of the few jobs that has continued to hold my passion and my interest," says Acord. ♦

The LEAD Program—an Experience to Remember

By Cheri Oswald, *Freedom of Information, LPA*

Remember the old song about the Postman? The lyrics ask the postman to "check and see, if there's a letter, a letter for me." Well, not too long ago I was singing that song. The letter that I was waiting for was not a love letter but a letter notifying me that I had been accepted into APHIS' Leadership, Education, and Development (LEAD) program. Fortunately for those around me, I received the letter and stopped singing.

As Government employees, all of us at one time or another have agonized over applying for a Federal job; getting into LEAD was no exception. Being selected to go through an assessment center should have sent waves of relief over me, but it didn't. Instead, I worried about it.

The assessment center. It sounds harmless enough, and it is after you've been through it. However, going through the process is an entirely different story. Looking back, only the first of the assessment's 3 1/2 days was nerve-racking. I remember walking into a room of strangers and being told that starting almost immediately I would be assessed on a variety of skills, including my ability to influence others, my team building skills, my oral and written communication skills, my organization and planning skills, my problem solving skills, my innovation skills, and my stress tolerance.

After being raced through a day of assessment activities, we had to sit down one-on-one with an assessor at the end of the day and hear what we did well and what we could do better.

I can still remember the stress and anxiety. But, I also remember the affect the experience had on me. It was a personal revelation to have someone I've never met sit down and point out my strengths and identify ways to improve my weaknesses. Donna West, a LEAD colleague from PPQ in Elizabeth, NJ, told me later that even if she hadn't been accepted into LEAD the assessment center was a fantastic learning experience. I have to agree with her. Lucky for both of us and the other LEAD participants, this was just the beginning of many more learning experiences.

Things moved quickly after



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Fifty eight employees were selected for APHIS' Leadership, Education, and Development (LEAD) program and participated in four, 2-week training workshops. LEAD participants also had to complete a management study project.

completing the assessment center. Before we knew it, 58 LEAD participants were selected, and we were off to Virginia Beach for the first of four, 2-week training workshops. Because of the group's size, we were split into two tracks, with the workshops running back-to-back. The final workshop brought both tracks together for what was our first and final meeting.

The first workshop in Virginia Beach was filled with classes and exercises, where we learned names and programs and began our favorite "B" word—bonding. Of all four workshops, I think the first was the most important. The group met there—most of us strangers—and left 2 weeks later fast friends and new colleagues. Though we joked often about the bonding that took place those first 2 weeks, it was that experience that made LEAD so

worthwhile and important.

The workshops and classes that we participated in over the 16-month program were challenging, informative, and fast-paced. From negotiating techniques and managing diversity to ethics in the workplace and creative problem solving, each workshop helped us focus on the skills and abilities that we would need as our careers moved forward.

In addition to the four, 2-week workshops, one more important component is required for successful completion of LEAD—the management study project. The objective of this project was three-fold. First, the project provides LEAD participants with an event-based learning experience that strengthens management skills, such as problem solving, written and oral communication and innovative thinking. With each of the 58 LEAD

participants researching and developing new management ideas, procedures, and approaches, the project also benefits the Agency. Finally, the project provides LEAD participants with visibility at the highest level possible. In other words, participants had to orally present their projects to members of the APHIS Management Team.

In theory, the management study project was to be planned, drafted, analyzed, and rehearsed over the course of the program's 16 months. I can't speak for my colleagues, but the June of 1993 due date seemed a long way away from Virginia Beach in April 1992, and it took me a while to formulate an idea and get it started. Most of us did our presentations on the same day and supported each other with words of

encouragement and by just being there. Project topics included, among others, APHIS and Change: How Can We Manage Transition, Reinventing Performance Management in APHIS, Clearance/Preclearance in the Year 2000 and Beyond, and Horizontal Communication (my own topic).

The LEAD program came to end with a graduation dinner on July 1, 1993. For me, it was a bittersweet evening. I had learned a great deal over the last year and a half and had made a number of wonderful friends. But, it was time to take the skills that had been so carefully cultivated in the program and move on. As I watched each of my LEAD friends step forward and accept their certificate from Acting APHIS Administrator Lonnie King, I realized

that we would never be together as a group again. I also knew that the learning experience and the bonding that we had all just been through would keep us together like fraternity and sorority brothers and sisters for a very long time.

Being accepted into the LEAD meant a great deal to me. Little did I know how much more it would mean after completing the entire program. The LEAD experience is something unrivaled by any other training program I've been a part of. The experience not only prepared me for career advancement into management, but it taught me about myself and helped me grow not just as a supervisor but as an employee, a peer, and a person. ♦

Giving the Gift of Leave: The Leave Transfer Program

By Lynn Barba, Human Resources, M&B

Imagine being in an accident that prevents you from returning to work for an extended period of time. Your doctor orders bed rest and physical therapy until you are fully rehabilitated and able to go back to work. "I can't take that much time off from work because I don't have enough leave" is what goes through many employees' minds in this situation.

Thanks to the Leave Transfer Program, having enough leave to cover extended absences due to personal illness or family hardship no longer has to be a major concern for employees. The Leave Transfer Program, which has been piloted throughout the Government for the last 5 years, became a permanent program in October 1993. This program permits Federal employees to donate accrued annual leave to other employees in personal or family medical emergency situations.

An employee can be a recipient of donated leave if he or she is experiencing a personal illness or a family hardship (a medical condition of an immediate family member which requires care to be provided by the employee). In the case of a personal illness, employees must exhaust all annual and sick leave prior to becoming a leave recipient; employees undergoing family hardship

must first exhaust all annual leave. In addition, the Human Resources Division (HRD) must determine that an applicant's absence from duty is or is expected to be at least 80 hours and that such an absence would result in a substantial loss of income because of the unavailability of paid leave.

According to Sophia Lawrence, the Personnel Management Specialist who manages the program, HRD has handled approximately 200 leave transfer cases since the pilot's inception. Plus, APHIS employees have generously donated more than 16,000 hours of leave to employees in need.

"There are employees who truly need the help and are so grateful to receive leave," says Lawrence. "It really makes me feel good to hear their relief when they learn that they no longer have to worry. It's a great program."

To apply to the Leave Transfer Program, employees should submit a completed AD-1046 (Application for Leave Transfer), a letter stating why the request is being made, and a doctor's certification of the medical emergency. Applications should be sent to Sophia Lawrence in HRD where they will be analyzed for approval.

Once an application package has been approved, donor solicitation may begin. Usually, the accepted employee's coworkers and/or supervisor conduct donor solicitation. The most common and effective approach to donor solicitation is to post and distribute flyers describing the employee's situation and how to donate leave.

Potential leave donors should complete and submit form AD-1043 (Leave Transfer Program Donor Application) indicating the person to whom they wish to donate leave. Donors should also note that only up to half the amount of annual leave normally accrued in 1 calendar year can be donated.

Because many employees find themselves in the position of having to use or lose leave at the end of the year, a notice will be distributed to remind employees of the option to use the Leave Transfer Program as an alternative to forfeiting accrued leave. Additionally, a directive with specific guidance and policies on the Leave Transfer Program will be forthcoming.

Contact Sophia Lawrence at (301) 436-6466 to receive application forms or learn more about the Leave Transfer Program. ♦

Honolulu International Airport Holds Agriculture Fair

Airports are not usually thought of as interesting places; usually, they are places to wait and wait and wait. However, travelers passing through Honolulu International Airport recently were in for a treat. Filling the airport's main lobby was an agriculture fair complete with games, displays, and presentations.

Organized by Honolulu International Airport's Public Relations Committee, the fair was the first of its kind ever held in the airport. Many hours of planning and coordinating went into the event by the committee's 24 volunteer members.

Throughout the lobby there were pictorial displays of Plant Protection and Quarantine (PPQ) activities, a collection of various confiscated contraband and plant pests, continuous showings of videotapes, a Hawaii sterile fruit fly rearing facility display, a slide show, and a fly-tac-toe game. There was also the ever-popular Beagle Brigade presentation.

Though the agriculture fair was a new venture for the Airport's Public Relations Committee, hosting events that promote an awareness of PPQ in the community is not new to them. In fact, it's their mission. Established in May 1992, the committee has accomplished a variety of public outreach activities ranging from visits to preschools and universities to plant societies and senior citizens clubs to name just a few.

"We are constantly evaluating, adjusting, and improving our presentations in hopes of being a valuable service to the community and to APHIS," says Susan Kunisaki, Assistant Officer in Charge. ♦

Photo above: To increase the public's awareness of the Plant Protection and Quarantine's (PPQ) mission to protect American agriculture, Honolulu International Airport's Public Relations Committee organized an agriculture fair in the airport's main lobby. Here, a traveler stops to look at a PPQ exhibit depicting various program activities.



APHIS PHOTO BY RON CHOCK



APHIS PHOTO BY RON CHOCK

Photo right: Plant Protection and Quarantine officer Clyde Higo watches as young travelers take time to test their skill at the challenging fly-tac-toe game devised by Melanie Ito.

Headquarters and DWRC Celebrate Groundbreaking

The building of the new APHIS Headquarters Complex has officially begun. On October 7, APHIS, General Services Administration, and Office of the Inspector General representatives turned out for the groundbreaking in Riverdale, MD. The new building owner Danny Colton and representatives from the building team's legal staff, construction staff, and engineering staff were also on hand to celebrate the event.

On September 1, the Denver Wildlife Research Center conducted its own groundbreaking ceremony on the Foothills Research Campus of Colorado State University in Fort Collins, CO.

APHIS representatives, University officials, and Fort Collins dignitaries gathered to celebrate the beginning of construction on the APHIS Wildlife Research Facility. The focus of the new Facility's research will be on resolving conflicts between wild animals and society.

A large animal research building, an office building, a conference center, a workshop, and animal pens will all be a part of the facility. The Wildlife Facility expects to attract world-class scientists to the Colorado State University campus, enhance educational opportunities at the University, encourage cooperative research between Colorado State faculty and APHIS scientists, and offer employment opportunities to students.

The building of the Wildlife Center is the first phase of a three phase project to relocate the Center from Denver to Fort Collins. ♦

Photo above: The new Headquarters Building owner Danny Colton (left) and Acting APHIS Administrator Lonnie King prepare to initiate the groundbreaking.

Photo right: The shovels were poised as Animal Damage Control Deputy Administrator Bobby R. Acord (beginning far left to right), Colorado State University Vice President of Research Judson Harper, Colorado Congressman Wayne Allard, Acting APHIS Administrator Lonnie King, Fort Collins Mayor Ann Azari, and Acting Denver Wildlife Research Director Richard Curnow broke ground at the site of the new APHIS Wildlife Research Facility in Fort Collins, CO.



APHIS PHOTO BY LAURIE SMITH



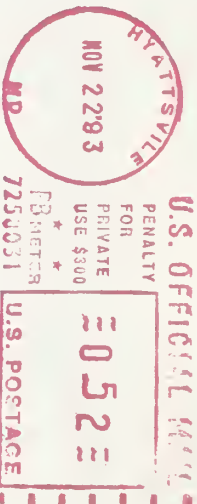
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